



WASHINGTON  
PERFORMING ARTS

# HOME DELIVERY PLUS

2021 SERIES



## *Rising, Together*

### J'NAI BRIDGES, mezzo-soprano

with LESTER GREEN, piano

PREMIERING FRI, MAR 26, 8pm (ET)

STREAMING ON DEMAND THROUGH  
THU, APR 1, 11:59pm (ET)

## PROGRAM

### **POEM: Prayer**

by Langston Hughes

#### **Prayer**

Music: Carlos Simon  
Text: Langston Hughes

#### **I Believe**

Music: Dave Ragland  
Text: Anonymous

#### **Von ewiger Liebe**

Music: Johannes Brahms  
Text: August Heinrich Hoffmann  
von Fallerslebe

#### **Die Nachtigall**

Music: Alban Berg  
Text: Theodor Storm

### **POEM: I See You**

by Lester Green

#### **Minstrel Man**

Music: Margaret Bonds  
Text: Langston Hughes

#### **Margaret's Lullaby (from *Margaret Garner*)**

Music: Richard Danielpour  
Libretto: Toni Morrison

### **Hold Fast to Dreams**

Music: Florence Price  
Text: Langston Hughes

#### **Ninghe, ninghe**

Music: Xavier Montsalvatge  
Text: Ildefonso Pereda Valdés

#### **Canto Negro**

Music: Xavier Montsalvatge  
Text: Nicolás Guillén

### **POEM: A Journey**

by Nikki Giovanni

#### **O Glory**

Music and Text (Verses): Shawn E. Okpebholo

#### **Let Us Break Bread Together**

Traditional  
Arr. Lester Green & J'Nai Bridges

### **LINGER LONGER: MASTERCLASS**

*Presented in partnership with the Coalition for African  
Americans in the Performing Arts (CAAPA)*

#### **Alexandria Crichlow, soprano**

#### **O mio babbino caro (from *Gianni Schicchi*)**

Music: Giacomo Puccini  
Libretto: Giovacchino Forzano

More Info, Series Sales, and Donations: [WashingtonPerformingArts.org](https://www.WashingtonPerformingArts.org)

# RIISING, TOGETHER

My inspiration for my personally curated program, *Rising, Together*, is inspired by my journey throughout the pandemic and the myriad of emotions and challenges that arose for me. Naturally, the pandemic opened a gateway for self-reflection and for me to ask deep questions of myself including:

“Who am I without a performance career?”

“What drives my passion?”

“How am I contributing to the healing of this World?”

“How can I use my gifts to represent who I am and where I come from?”

“In what ways can I elevate others?”

During this present season of self-examination, I continue to ask and answer these questions. Authenticity, history, hope, healing, inspiration, and togetherness continue to be central themes in my journey and are the themes I explore through *Rising, Together*.

Debuting *Rising, Together* with the full support and in collaboration of Washington Performing Arts also provided the wonderful opportunity to delve into my artistic creativity.

From highlighting the works of living composers to reciting poetry and giving a masterclass, *Rising, Together* embraces my passion for highlighting others and allows me to bring you, the audience, along my journey of self-discovery and exploration of the themes.

Thank you for joining me in this journey. My hope is to inspire you to reflect on your own existence and what it means to come together, to “rise together” in the name of love.

– J’Nai Bridges

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

### Prayer

Music: Carlos Simon

Text: Langston Hughes

Gather up in the arms of your pity

Gather up in the arms of your pity

The sick, the depraved, the desperate, the tired,  
All the scum of our weary city.

Gather up in the arms of your pity

Gather up in the arms of your love

Those who expect no love from above

No love from above

No love from above

### I Believe

Music: Dave Ragland

Text: Anonymous

I believe in the sun,  
Even when it is not shining,

I believe in love,  
Even when I feel it not.

I believe in God,  
Even when He is silent

### **Von ewiger Liebe**

Music: Johannes Brahms

Text: August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben

Dunkel, wie dunkel in Wald und in Feld!  
Abend schon ist es, nun schweiget die Welt.  
Nirgend noch Licht und nirgend noch Rauch,  
Ja, und die Lerche sie schweiget nun auch.  
Kommt aus dem Dorfe der Bursche heraus,  
Gibt das Geleit der Geliebten nach Haus,  
Führt sie am Weidengebüsche vorbei,  
Redet so viel und so mancherlei:  
"Leidest du Schmach und betrübest du dich,  
Leidest du Schmach von andern um mich,  
Werde die Liebe getrennt so geschwind,  
Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind.  
Scheide mit Regen und scheide mit Wind,  
Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind."  
Spricht das Mägdelein, Mägdelein spricht:  
"Unsere Liebe sie trennet sich nicht!  
Fest ist der Stahl und das Eisen gar sehr,  
Unsere Liebe ist fester noch mehr.  
Eisen und Stahl, man schmiedet sie um,  
Unsere Liebe, wer wandelt sie um?  
Eisen und Stahl, sie können zergehn,  
Unsere Liebe muß ewig bestehn!"

### **Die Nachtigall**

Music: Alban Berg

Text: Theodor Storm

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall  
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;  
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,  
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall  
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut,  
Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen;  
Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut  
Und duldet still der Sonne Glut  
Und weiß nicht, was beginnen.

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall  
Die ganze Nacht gesungen;  
Da sind von ihrem süßen Schall,  
Da sind in Hall und Widerhall  
Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

### **Of Eternal Love**

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Dark, how dark in wood and field!  
Evening has already fallen, and now the world is silent.  
Nowhere is there light and nowhere is there smoke,  
Yes, and even the lark is now silent as well.  
Out of the village there comes a young lad,  
Taking his sweetheart home,  
He leads her past the willow bushes,  
Talking so much and about so many things:  
"If you suffer disgrace and feel dejected,  
If others shame you about me,  
Then let our love be sundered as swiftly,  
As quickly as we were united before.  
It will go with the rain, it will go with the wind,  
As quickly as we were united before."  
The maiden speaks, the maiden says:  
"Our love will not be sundered!  
Steel is strong, and iron is very strong;  
Our love is even stronger.  
Iron and steel can be reforged,  
[But] our love—who could alter it?  
Iron and steel can be melted down,  
[But] our love will exist forever!"

### **The nightingale**

Translation © Emily Ezust,

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It happened because the nightingale  
sang the whole night long;  
from her sweet call,  
from the echo and re-echo,  
roses have sprung up.

She was but recently a wild blossom,  
and now she walks, deep in thought;  
she carries her summer hat in her hand,  
enduring quietly the heat of the sun,  
knowing not what to begin.

It happened because the nightingale  
sang the whole night long;  
from her sweet call,  
from the echo and re-echo,  
roses have sprung up.

**I See You**

Lester Green

I see you  
 I see you standing  
 I see you sitting  
 I see you waiting for life to return to places you  
     once knew  
 Your windows are open  
 The winds are blowing  
 Blowing down the barriers that keep you from me  
 I feel you  
 I feel you breathing  
 I feel you breathing in the hope that life will return  
 Breathing out the sadness that has pinned you  
     down so long  
 Breathing on the breath that connects me to you  
 I hear you  
 I hear you singing  
 I hear you singing a song with memories and hopes  
     intertwined  
 Remember me with your song  
 Remember me with your love  
 Remember me with your sadness  
 Remember me with your joy  
 Remember me with your pain  
 And let the memory fade away until, resting alive,  
 You can see you again

**Minstrel Man**

Music: Margaret Bonds

Text: Langston Hughes

Because my mouth  
 Is wide with laughter  
 And my throat  
 Is deep with song,  
 You do not think  
 I suffer after  
 I have held my pain  
 So long?  
 Because my mouth  
 Is wide with laughter,  
 You do not hear  
 My inner cry?  
 Because my feet  
 Are gay with dancing,  
 You do not know  
 I die?

**Margaret's Lullaby (from *Margaret Garner*)**

Music: Richard Danielpour

Libretto: Toni Morrison

Sad things, far away,  
 Soft things, come and play.  
 Lovely baby.

Sleep in the meadow, sleep in the hay,  
 Baby's got a dreamin' on the way.

Bad things, far away  
 Pretty things, here to stay.  
 Sweet baby, smile at me,  
 Lovely baby, go to sleep.

Sleep in the meadow, sleep in the hay,  
 Baby's gonna dream the night away.

Lovely baby, pretty baby,  
 Baby's gonna dream the night away.

**Hold Fast to Dreams**

Music: Florence Price

Text: Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams  
 For if dreams die  
 Life is a broken-winged bird  
 That cannot fly.  
 Hold fast to dreams  
 For when dreams go  
 Life is a barren field  
 Frozen with snow.

### **Ninghe, ninghe**

Music: Xavier Montsalvatge

Text: Ildefonso Pereda Valdés

Ninghe, ninghe, ninghe,  
tan chiquitito,  
el negrito  
que no quiere dormir.

Cabeza de coco,  
grano de café,  
con lindas motitas,  
con ojos grandotes  
como dos ventanas  
que miran al mar.

Cierra los ojitos,  
negrito asustado;  
el mandinga blanco  
te puede comer.  
¡Ya no eres esclavo!

Y si duermes mucho,  
el señor de casa  
promete comprar  
traje con botones  
para ser un 'groom.'

Ninghe, ninghe, ninghe,  
duérmete, negrito,  
cabeza de coco,  
grano de café.

### **Lullaby for a little black boy**

English Translation © Richard Stokes

Translations by Jacqueline Cockburn and

Richard Stokes published in the *The Spanish Song  
Companion* (Gollancz, 1992)

Lullay, lullay, lullay,  
tiny little child,  
little black boy,  
who won't go to sleep.

Head like a coconut,  
head like a coffee bean,  
with pretty freckles  
and wide eyes  
like two windows  
looking out to sea.

Close your tiny eyes,  
frightened little boy,  
or the white devil  
will eat you up.  
You're no longer a slave!

And if you sleep soundly,  
the master of the house  
promises to buy  
a suit with buttons  
to make you a 'groom.'

Lullay, lullay, lullay,  
sleep, little black boy,  
head like a coconut,  
head like a coffee bean.

## **Canto negro**

Music: Xavier Montsalvatge

Text: Nicolás Guillén

¡Yambambó, yambambé!  
Repica el congo solongo,  
repica el negro bien negro.  
congo solongo del Songo  
baila yambó sobre un pie.

Mamatomba,  
serembé cuserembá,

El negro canta y se ajuma.  
el negro se ajuma y canta.  
el negro canta y se va.

Acuemem e serembó  
aé,  
yambó  
aé.

Tamba, tamba, tamba, tamba,  
tamba del negro que tumba,  
tamba del negro, caramba,  
caramba, que el negro tumba,  
¡Yambá, yambó, yambambé!

## **Negro Song**

English Translation © Jacqueline Cockburn

Translations by Jacqueline Cockburn and

Richard Stokes published in the *The Spanish  
Song Companion* (Gollancz, 1992)

Yambambó, yambambé!  
The congo solongo is ringing,  
the black man, the real black man is ringing;  
congo solongo from the Songo  
is dancing the yambó on one foot.

Mamatomba,  
Serembe cuserembá.

The black man sings and gets drunk,  
the black man gets drunk and sings,  
the black man sings and goes away.

Acuemem e serembó  
aé,  
yambó  
aé.

Bam, bam, bam, bam,  
bam of the black man who tumbles;  
drum of the black man, wow,  
wow, how the black man's tumbling!  
¡Yambá, yambó, yambambé!

## **A Journey**

Nikki Giovanni

It's a journey . . . that I propose . . . I am not the guide . . . nor technical  
assistant . . . I will be your fellow passenger . . .

Though the rail has been ridden . . . winter clouds cover . . . autumn's  
exuberant quilt . . . we must provide our own guide-posts . . .

I have heard . . . from previous visitors . . . the road washes out  
sometimes . . . and passengers are compelled . . . to continue groping . . .  
or turn back . . . I am not afraid . . .

I am not afraid . . . of rough spots . . . or lonely times . . . I don't fear . . .  
. the success of this endeavor . . . I am Ra . . . in a space . . . not to be  
discovered . . . but invented . . .

I promise you nothing . . . I accept your promise . . . of the same we are  
simply riding . . . a wave . . . that may carry . . . or crash . . .

It's a journey . . . and I want . . . to go . . .

## **O Glory**

Music and Text (Verses): Shawn E. Okhebpolo

O Glory, O Glory,  
There is room enough in paradise,  
To have a home in Glory.

On that sweet day,  
No more a slave, I'll be.  
To have a home in Glory.

In Jesus' arms where I am truly free.  
To have a home in Glory.

O, Glory! O, Glory!  
There is room enough in paradise,  
To have a home in Glory.

I'll see my child that once was sold away.  
In mansions bright,  
We dwell for endless days.

O Glory, O Glory,  
O Glory, O Glory.  
There is room enough in paradise,  
To have my home in Glory.

## **Let Us Break Bread Together**

Arr. Lester Green & J'Nai Bridges

Let us break bread together on our knees.  
Let us break bread together on our knees.  
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,  
O Lord, have mercy on me.

## **O mio babbino caro (from *Gianni Schicchi*)**

Music: Giacomo Puccini

Libretto: Giovacchino Forzano

O mio babbino caro,  
mi piace, è bello, bello,  
Vo'andare in Porta Rossa  
a comperar l'anello!

Sì, sì, ci voglio andare!  
E se l'amassi indarno,  
andrei sul Ponte Vecchio,  
ma per buttarmi in Arno!

Mi struggo e mi tormento!  
O Dio, vorrei morir!  
Babbo, pietà, pietà!  
Babbo, pietà, pietà!

Oh my dear papa,  
I love him, he is handsome, handsome,  
I want to go to Porta Rossa  
To buy the ring!

Yes, yes, I want to go there!  
And if I loved him in vain,  
I would go to the Ponte Vecchio,  
And throw myself in the Arno!

I am anguished and tormented!  
Oh God, I'd want to die!  
Papa, have pity, have pity!  
Papa, have pity, have pity!

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



American mezzo-soprano **J'Nai Bridges**, known for her “plush-voiced mezzo-soprano” (*The New York Times*), has been heralded as “a rising star” (*Los Angeles Times*), gracing the world’s top opera and concert stages.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the cancellation of Ms. Bridges’s engagements in the title role of *Carmen* at The Metropolitan Opera and Canadian Opera Company, she has emerged at this unique moment as a leading figure in classical music’s shift toward conversations of inclusion and racial justice in the performing arts. Bridges led a highly successful panel on race and inequality in opera with the Los Angeles Opera that drew international acclaim for being a “conversation of striking scope and candor” (*The New York Times*). Bridges also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel for two episodes of the digital SOUND/STAGE series. Other upcoming highlights of Bridges’s 2020/21 season include her role debut as Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena* at Dutch National Opera.

Highlights from her 2019/20 season included her highly acclaimed debut at The Metropolitan Opera as Nefertiti in a sold-out run of Philip Glass’s opera *Akhnaten*, as well as a house and role debut with Washington National Opera as Dalila in *Samson et Dalila*. Bridges was also originally scheduled to sing the title role of *Carmen* at Dutch National Opera and was scheduled to make her debut with the Festival d’Aix-en-provence singing Margret in a new production of *Wozzeck*, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, which were unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic.

Other recent career highlights include her sold-out Carnegie Hall Recital debut, her role debut of Kasturbai in *Satyagraha* at LA Opera, her Los Angeles Master Chorale debut, and her debuts at Dutch National Opera and the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. In addition, Ms. Bridges made her *Carmen* role debut at the San Francisco Opera, creating the role of Josefa Segovia in the world premiere of John Adams’s *Girls of the Golden West* at San Francisco Opera, her debut as Preziosilla in *La Forza del Destino* with Opernhaus Zürich, and

performances as Carmen in the world premiere of *Bel Canto*, an opera by Jimmy Lopez, based on the novel by Ann Patchett at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Bridges is a recipient of the prestigious 2018 Sphinx Medal of Excellence Award, a 2016 Richard Tucker Career Grant, first prize winner at the 2016 Francisco Viñas International Competition, first prize winner at the 2015 Gerda Lissner Competition, a recipient of the 2013 Sullivan Foundation Award, a 2012 Marian Anderson award winner, the recipient of the 2011 Sara Tucker Study Grant, the recipient of the 2009 Richard F. Gold Grant from The Shoshana Foundation, and the winner of the 2008 Leontyne Price Foundation Competition. J’Nai completed a three-year residency with the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, represented the United States at the prestigious BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition and was a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, New York.

A native of Tacoma, Washington, she earned her Master of Music degree from Curtis Institute of Music, and her Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from the Manhattan School of Music.



A South Carolina native, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonian, multi-instrumentalist and -genreist, **Dr. Lester Green** has extensive credits as a solo pianist, recital partner, and conductor. Dr. Green serves on the voice faculties of the University of Maryland College

Park School of Music and Morgan State University and has performed as a collaborative pianist at the Kennedy Center, Washington National Opera, Colour of Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival and School, and with many other arts organizations in venues across the U.S. and abroad. In addition to his teaching and performing activities, Dr. Green serves as Artistic Advisor to the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, on the artistic team of the Children’s Chorus of Washington, and as Artistic Director for the Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts (CAAPA)—a non-profit arts organization, working with an executive team and community partners to showcase, acknowledge, encourage, and develop excellence in the achieve-

ments of classical musicians of color and others in the U.S. and abroad. Dr. Green earned degrees in solo piano from the University of South Carolina and the Peabody Institute, and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Collaborative Piano at the University of Maryland College Park. His film credits include *Samuel Coleridge Taylor and His Music in America: 1900-1912* and *Paul Laurence Dunbar: Beyond the Mask*, a PBS documentary. While Dr. Green enjoys singing, creative writing, composition, and other creative activities, his most fulfilling work is in helping other artists unlock their own creative potential to express their art with emotional impact, excellence, and integrity.



A native of New York City, **Alexandria Crichlow** is known for her captivating stage presence and smooth timbre. Alexandria received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in Vocal Performance from Morgan State University

in 2019. She is an honored awardee of multiple grants and competitions including First Prize winner in The International Constitutional Music Competition, The National Association of Teachers Maryland District Competition, and The National

Association of Negro Musicians Maryland Chapter's Marian Anderson Vocal Competition. Alexandria has traveled and played numerous roles, such as La Zelartrice (*Suor Angelica*) with Amalfi Coast Music Festival in Maiori, Italy, and Alice Ruth Moore (*Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadows*) with Morgan State University Opera Workshop Program. In 2019, Alexandria's portrayal of Maria in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra production of *Porgy & Bess* (Baltimore, Maryland), under the direction of Marin Alsop, paved the way for her return to the role in the Philadelphia Orchestra's 2020 live CD recording of *Porgy & Bess Highlights* at the world-renown Kimmel Center (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). Currently, Alexandria studies Opera Performance with Margaret Lattimore at Mannes School of Music. She looks forward to making her Berlin, Germany debut playing Suor Genovieffa and Laretta in Berlin Opera Academy's 2021–2022 OpernFest productions of *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. As an artist and entrepreneur, Alexandria looks forward to future musical endeavors to cultivate, create, and aid the world!

## ABOUT THE HOST



**Anastasia Tsioulcas** is an NPR Arts reporter and the Series Host of *Home Delivery Plus 2021*. Tsioulcas's NPR roles have included interviews with the likes of composers Steve Reich and Terry Riley and, as a former reporter and producer for NPR Music, production

of episodes of the popular *Tiny Desk Concert* series. For *Home Delivery Plus*, she lends her insights to a number of performance "packages," from introducing the events to moderating post-performance talks to curating Spotify playlists inspired by package artists and themes.

# SPECIAL THANKS

## EVENT SPONSORS

*This performance is made possible through the generous support of Anne and Burton Fishman, Reginald Van Lee, and Lydia Micheaux Marshall.*

*Home Delivery Plus performances recorded at Sixth & I are made possible in part through the generous support of the Galena-Yorktown Foundation.*

*Linger Longers on Home Delivery Plus are made possible through the generous support of an anonymous donor.*

Anne and I are delighted to be able to sponsor this wonderful artist, who brought a note of triumph and better times to our Gala last year, during our bleakest days. Then and now, J’Nai represents all that has made Washington Performing Arts such a vital part of our lives for decades. During these months of exile from our concert halls, we are grateful that WPA has continued to bring us music and dance and the promise that the performing arts will survive and prevail.

– Burton Fishman

*Rising, Together* recognizes the works of Black classical composers, who have historically been excluded from the canon, alongside works by artists like Brahms, Berg, and Danielpour. In highlighting the importance of community and “rising, together,” Ms. Bridges offers exactly the type of programming we need more of, in the midst of our current polarization and isolation. It is an honor and privilege to sponsor J’Nai Bridges in this performance.

– Reginald Van Lee

## SERIES SPONSORS

*Thank you to the following lead supporters of Washington Performing Arts’s mission-driven work in 2020/21, including presentation of Home Delivery Plus: Jacqueline Badger Mars and Mars, Incorporated; D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Betsy and Robert Feinberg; Dr. Gary Mather and Ms. Christina Co Mather; the National Capital Arts and Cultural Affairs Program and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts; Tom Gallagher; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; and the Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts.*

